

Minutes of Best Practices Committee of May 9, 2008

Present: Lisa DePiano, Wendy Foxmyn, David Narkewicz, Alex Ghiselin and Bob Reckman. The meeting was taped by NCTV for future broadcast. Jim Palermo was not present.

Lisa DePiano reviewed the agenda.

David Narkewicz agreed to serve as the stacker and Bob Reckman as the minute taker.

The minutes of our meeting of April 18 were approved as revised.

Alex reviewed the plans for the forum on Tuesday, May 13. Jason Heffner will serve as the moderator. The agenda for the forum had been circulated electronically previously. After an introduction by Lisa (which will include some history and ground rules), the committee will be introduced and members of the public will be asked to introduce themselves. There will be a large sheet of paper on the walls with various city departments listed (i.e. city Council meetings). People will be asked to write down their experience with these departments and process and to make connections as they feel are appropriate. People will be separated into small groups with a recorder. They will discuss their experience with the City and then report back to the full group. Everyone will then have an opportunity to say what they thought was the best comment that they heard. There will then be closing comments and Lisa will ask people if they want to serve on subcommittees. People will be told about the Google group and encouraged to get involved with the work of the BPC. The working group thinks they have enough moderators, but will need some people to serve as recorders.

Michael Bardsley arrived at 4:20 PM.

We discussed the issue of subcommittees. The working group (Alex, Michael and Wendy) recommended that we not make any decision prior to the forum on Tuesday. We agreed to defer that discussion until later in the meeting.

Michael Bardsley reported on the working group of the City Council and the Planning Board about the proposed Rezoning Committee. That working group has yet to meet. There is a major question about how the rezoning committee should be constituted and what its charge should be. Wendy, Alex, Lisa and Bob made comments that the process should include ample opportunity for public input very early in the process. The Ward 3 Neighborhood Association has a sustainability committee which is very interested in this issue.

Graham King arrived at 4:45. He had done some research about recycling in Seattle which the committee heard a short summary of. The City will be dealing with the landfill in a number of settings in the near future. Wendy asked Graham to look into how they have involved the public in recycling effort.

Lisa DePiano and Bob Reckman reported on the meeting at the Fairgrounds on Wednesday evening. This meeting was for the neighbors as part of the stakeholder interviews by the Master Plan consultant. The neighbors raised many good questions and were told that when the Master Plan is complete there will be another similar meeting to show them the Master Plan. Bob and Lisa were impressed by the quality of the meeting and the response by BSP and Bruce Shallcross.

Bonnie Rose arrived at 5:05.

We discussed the need for working groups or subcommittees to follow best practices. Do they need to post their meetings or keep minutes? Do they need to check back with the BPC before making decisions?

Wendy Foxmyn thought that we should complete several case studies. Jim Palermo is concerned about this. Bob Reckman thinks that we should focus on:

- best practices in other communities,
- additional small forums
- encourage use of Wendy's form for reporting on public meetings

- interviews with members of City Board, Commissions and department heads
- case studies of historic decisions in Northampton.

Wendy Foxmyn asked if Lisa and Jim would like to continue to chair the committee but have other members run the meeting. Lisa said that would be good. Wendy offered to facilitate the next meeting. David will reserve a room. Lisa will draft an agenda and circulate it to the committee electronically for suggestions from the committee. The June meetings will be at 6 PM on June 4 and 26.

The committee agreed that working group would meet after the forum to process the results and report to the BPC. That working group will meet on Tuesday, May 20 in a location to be determined. David will schedule the room.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45.

Respectfully submitted by Bob Reckman